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ABSTRACT

A brief overview of gifted and talented students touches on definitions of giftedness, typical characteristics of gifted and talented students, incidence in the school population, and educational alternatives. Lists of references for further reading, as well as organizational resources, are included. (JW)

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DIGEST #422

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS: AN OVERVIEW

What is meant by "gifted and talented"?

In 1972, then U.S. Commissioner of Education Sidney Marland presented a practical definition of giftedness that is still widely used today. That report identified gifted and talented children as those who exhibit outstanding ability or talent in a variety of areas including general intelligence, specific aptitudes, creativity, leadership, or artistic ability, and who have been identified as possessing such ability by professionally qualified individuals such as teachers, psychologists, or others with special training in the area of the child's special talent.

Other definitions include productive thinking and psychomotor ability as areas of giftedness. Renzulli (1978) said that giftedness and talent stem from the interdependence of three trait clusters: above average general abilities, task commitment, and creativity.

How many students are gifted and talented?

The prevalence of giftedness is a function of the definition chosen. The federal figure most quoted ranges from 3% to 5% of the school population.

What are some typical characteristics of gifted and talented students?

Dorothy Sisk (1977) listed seven typical characteristics for gifted children:

- Early use of advanced vocabulary
- Keen observation and curiosity.
- Retention of a variety of information.
- Periods of intense concentration
- Ability to understand complex concepts, perceive relationships, and think abstractly.
- A broad and changing spectrum of interests
- Strong critical thinking skills and self criticism.

School aged gifted children are sometimes classified into the high achieving students, the social leaders, the creative intellectuals, and the rebels. Torrance, whose *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking* is widely used, suggests that strengths in any of a number of areas may indicate exceptional ability. Those areas include:

- Ability to express feelings and emotions.
- Enjoyment of, and ability in, the visual and performing arts.
- Humor.

- Originality of ideas in problem solving
- Problem centeredness or persistence in problem solving.
- Richness of imagery in informal language

What are some of the educational implications of giftedness?

Because of the nature of giftedness, no single index should be used to identify this population. In addition to individual intelligence tests, a battery of creativity tests, social development tests, behavior checklists, and parent and teacher nominations should be administered. Increasingly, educators are calling for special methods of identifying giftedness in children from ethnically or culturally different backgrounds.

Among intervention methods used with gifted students are enrichment (providing special materials or tasks for students who master the regular curriculum) and acceleration (promoting a bright child beyond the chronologically age appropriate grade). Early admission, ability grouping, advanced placement, independent study, mentors, and special extracurricular programs are other widely used approaches for educating gifted and talented students. The underlying assumption of all these approaches is that the gifted student requires a differentiated curriculum.

REFERENCES FOR PARENTS

- Kaufmann, F. *Your gifted child and you*. 1976. (\$5.50, CEC member price \$4.68 from The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston VA 22091)
- Miller, B. S., & Price, M. *The gifted child, the family, and the community*. (\$17.50 from Walker & Co., 720 Fifth Ave., New York NY 10019)
- Moore, L. P. *Does this mean my kid's a genius?* 1981 (\$11.95 from McGraw Hill Book Co., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10020)
- Sisk, D. What if your child is gifted? *American Education*, 1977, 13(8), 23-26.

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Baldwin, A. Y., Gear, G. H., & Lucito, L. J. (Eds.) *Educational planning for the gifted: Overcoming cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic barriers*, 1977
CEC, 1920 Association Dr., Reston VA 22091
- Gallagher, J. J. (Ed.). *Gifted children: Reaching their potential*. 1979. Proceedings of the Second World Conference for Gifted and Talented Children of 1977. (\$14.00 from Trillium Press, P.O. Box 921, New York NY 10159)

Laycock, F. *Gifted children*. 1979. (From Scott, Foresman, & Co., 1900 E. Lake Ave., Glenview IL 60025)

Perrone, P. A., & Male, R. A. *The developmental education and guidance of talented learners*. 1981 (From Aspen Systems Corporation, 1600 Research Blvd., Rockville MD 20850)

Renzulli, J. S. What makes giftedness? Reexamining a definition. *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 1978.

Tannenbaum, A. J., & Neuman, E. (Eds.). *Perspectives on gifted and talented education*. Gifted and Talented Project, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1980 Individual titles in the series:

Elementary and secondary level programs for the gifted and talented, by Harry J. Morgan, et al (\$5.95)

Gifted young children, by Wendy Conklin Roedel and others (\$5.50)

Identification of the gifted, by Elizabeth Hagen (\$5.95)

Reaching out. Advocacy for the gifted and talented, by A. Tannenbaum & E. Neuman (\$4.95)

Somewhere to turn: Strategies for parents of gifted and talented children, by Eleanor Gittall & Nancy Skinner (\$5.50)

Training teachers of the gifted and talented, by Margaret Lindsey (\$5.50)

(\$32.50 for package of six from Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York NY 10027)

RESOURCES

American Association for Gifted Children
15 Gramercy Park
New York NY 10003
212/473-4266

American Mensa Limited
1701 W. 3rd Street 1-R
Brooklyn NY 11223

Society for individuals who "have established, by score in a standard intelligence test, that their intelligence is higher than that of 98% of the population."

Association for Gifted and Talented Students
1627 Frankfort Street
New Orleans LA 70122

The Association for the Gifted, a Division of
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston VA 22091

Publication: *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*

Gifted Children's Newsletter
530 University Ave.
Palo Alto CA 94301

National Association for Creative Children and Adults
8080 Springdale Drive
Cincinnati OH 45236
513/631-1777

Publication: *The Creative Child and Adult Quarterly*

National Association for Gifted Children
4175 Lovell Road
Box 30, Suite 140
Circle Pines, MN 55014
612/784-3475

Publication: *Gifted Child Quarterly*

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

ERIC/CEC has a number of publications on the education of gifted and talented children, including

- Multimedia materials:

A sound/filmstrip training package on creativity and leadership.

A sound/filmstrip package on identification, curriculum alternatives, and social and emotional development

- ERIC information analysis products, such as

- CEC publications, such as

Under One Cover, Gifted and Talented Education in Perspective, by Joseph S. Renzulli and Elizabeth P. Stoddard (Eds.), 1980. (\$12.25, CEC member price \$10.41)

- Computer Search Reprints: Reprints of selected computer searches (\$10.00; CEC member price \$8.50) Sample topics:

Programs for Preschool Gifted Children

Gifted Elementary School Students: Programs & Curriculum Guides

Gifted Adolescents: Programs & Curriculum Guides

Gifted Underachievers

Computers & Gifted Students

Gifted Minority Students: Identification & Programs

Gifted Female Students

Identification of the Gifted

- Digests on the Gifted and Talented—A collection of 24 two-page reproducible fact sheets about educating gifted and talented students. (\$6.90; CEC member price \$6.00; available from The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091).

Call or write us for details!

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